

W. B. Camp
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PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT,

CORRESPONDENCE,

AND

ORDERS OF THE COURT OF DIRECTORS,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

MR. HIPPISELY'S MOTIONS,

FOR

REGULATING THE PAYMENTS

TO THE

KING'S AND COMPANY'S TROOPS SERVING IN

INDIA.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT

CONFERENCES

ORDER OF THE COURT OF DIRECTORS

OF THE SUBJECT

MR. HENRIETTA MORRIS

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SECRETARY THE PARLIAMENT

1872

AND COMPANY LONDON

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HAVING been present at the Debate on the last Session of Parliament, when Mr. Hippisley introduced his motions in support of the just claims of the military service of the East-India Company, I think it but an act of justice to Mr. Hippisley, as well as a duty to the corps of which I have the honour to be a member, to avail myself of the opportunity afforded by the first ships of the season, to circulate among my brother Officers this very flattering, but just testimony to their merits and services.

I have extracted the debate from the most authentic publication of the Proceedings of Parliament, and have the gratification also of being enabled to subjoin Copies of some interesting Correspondence on the same subject, together with Extracts from the last General Letters of the Honourable the Court of Directors to their Governments in India.

WILLIAM DAVISON,

*London,
Dec. 4, 1791.*

Lieutenant, Madras Establishment.

HAVING been present at the trial of the late
of Parliament, when Mr. [unclear] [unclear]
in a short report of the trial of [unclear]
[unclear] of the [unclear] Company, I think it not
of [unclear] to the [unclear] as well as to the
[unclear] of which I have [unclear] to be a [unclear]
and [unclear] of the [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] to [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]

I have enclosed the [unclear] of [unclear]
[unclear] of the [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
the [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
of [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
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WILLIAM DAVENPORT

London, [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
1814

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT,

AND

CORRESPONDENCE,

&c. &c.

House of Commons, 25 May, 1791.

IN the course of the debate on the bill for granting extraordinary powers to Earl Cornwallis, General Smith made some observations on the hardship to which the officers in the East-India Company were exposed, who had been absent from India for a greater term than five years, and proposed a clause for repealing that part of the act respecting the limitation to their return.

General Smith, on being informed that it would come forward with more propriety as a separate motion when the subject of Lord Cornwallis's bill was disposed of, withdrew his clause, pledging himself to renew the subject on a future day.

The Speaker having resumed the chair,

Mr. HIPPISEY observed, that what had fallen from an honourable General, in stating certain difficulties under which the Company's Officers laboured, in a particular

particular instance, would, he flattered himself, be a sufficient apology for his trespassing shortly on the patience of the House, and offering to their consideration a grievance of the greatest magnitude, and the more severe, as they were allotted to bear it at the same instant that the King's military in the same garrisons, and on the same duty, were exempted from it. That it must be in the recollection of many Members of the House, and of every one who had read the history of the last war, that the Company's military were suffering under an arrear of fifteen, eighteen, and even twenty months, when his Majesty's troops were paid their subsistence regularly two months in advance. That this was not the only hardship attached to their contrasted situation; the King's troops were paid in gold, purchased at a premium, and consequently at a loss to the Company, whilst the Company's troops in the southern districts were paid their pittance in a debased currency, on which almost an immediate loss was often experienced of ten to fifteen per cent. The ill consequences of these heavy arrears appeared in several mutinies among the sepoys, which, indeed, were soon checked, by the meritorious and exemplary conduct of their officers; but which still had left a very serious impression, and we might not be always equally successful in suppressing the alarming consequences of dissensions so justifiably founded. Mr. Hippisley here observed, that General Meadows had himself acknowledged, that a heavy arrear was accruing, more than twelve months since; that he could not, therefore, but anticipate alarming consequences, if such odious distinctions still were to obtain between the King's and Company's military, whose merits and services were equal. He therefore begged to submit the following resolutions, in hope that

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the executive power would follow them up with the best and speediest means of remedying the evil :

“ That the payments to his Majesty’s troops, serving in India, and those of the East-India Company, ought to be kept as equal as possible, and that no distinction should be made in the denomination of currency in which such payments are issued to the military, serving in the same garrisons or districts.

“ That it is the duty of those intrusted with the direction or control of the affairs of the East-India Company, to send out such orders to their Governments as may most effectually secure the observance of a regulation so necessary to preserve harmony in the service.”

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that before the motion was taken into consideration, the facts on which it was founded must be established.

Mr. HIPPISELY replied, that he would pledge himself to prove the facts to the House, by incontrovertible documents ; and if he now withdrew his motions, he should press for another day to bring them forward with his proofs ; this, he said, he owed to the service with which he had, for many years, the honour to be nearly connected.

Motions withdrawn.

House of Commons, 6 June, 1791.

Mr. HIPPISLEY rose to make his promised motion, which he had withdrawn on a former day, respecting the pay of the troops in India, which, he observed, in its consequences, was a subject of as much importance as had been brought before the House this session. His object, he said, was, to vindicate the just claims, and to offer some future security to a valuable description of men, who had fought patiently and bravely under accumulated difficulties, and whose unprecedented sufferings could be equalled only by the willing spirit, the fortitude, and perseverance, which enabled them to act under them. That on the fidelity and attachment of this description of men depended the existence of the British empire in India! Mr. Hippisley observed, that when he stated the grounds of his present motion in a former debate, a right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) thought it necessary that vouchers should be brought to the several facts, before it could be entertained by the House: that in consequence Mr. Hippisley had written to some Officers of rank, both in his Majesty's and the Company's service, and also to the Paymaster of the Southern army, in the last war, whose replies he had caused to be printed and circulated among the Members of the House. Mr. Hippisley had also moved for the production of a letter from the India House, of Colonel Fullarton, Commander in Chief of the Southern army, to the Government of Madras; which letter was on the table, from which Mr. Hippisley read some extracts, stating, that the large arrears due to the troops, and other grievances, rendered it almost impracticable for officers to maintain discipline in
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their corps, happy if they could prevent mutiny among men, who, brave and faithful as they undoubtedly were, could hardly be restrained from clamour, when reduced to procure subsistence, *even by selling their own children!* These facts, Mr. Hippisley observed, had fallen within his own knowledge, as well as Colonel Fullarton's; and he submitted to the feelings of the House, what heart-rending distress that must be, when conflicting with the extreme attachment every native of the East is known to cherish for his family! Mr. Hippisley then particularly stated many strong testimonies to the merits and services of the officers of the East-India Company, whose distresses had been little short of what had been endured by the native troops; that they were habituated, as Colonel Fullarton had sagaciously observed, to act in emergencies with a facility that few subordinate officers in Europe ever had a prospect of acquiring; that their zeal, knowledge, and ability, was strongly exemplified during the last war; that their humanity had not been less conspicuous than their judgement and discretion, in soothing the sufferings of their soldiers, relieving their wants, and restraining, as far as possible, the well-grounded clamours of men, whom the public exigences had left in the extremity of distress. That the Public should ever be watchful and liberal to confirm the attachment of the sepoys; that by their good conduct, their settlements had hitherto been preserved; and to them must we look for after stability; let them receive the common justice due to every soldier; let them be regularly paid, and enabled to subsist their families. Mr. Hippisley then proceeded to state the distinction which obtained, last war, in the Southern provinces, in the mode of paying the King's and Company's troops, whose merits were

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confessedly

confessedly equal, but whose treatment, with respect to the payment, had been widely and painfully unequal. The King's troops, in the garrisons and field, he could state from his own knowledge, (and as he had noticed to the House on a former day,) were always paid their subsistence two months in advance, and in gold, purchased generally at a premium for that express purpose, while the Company's troops, on the same duty, and in the same garrisons, received their pay in the debased currency of the provinces, on which they suffered loss, often of 10 or 15 per cent. That while the King's troops were in their subsistence two months in advance, the native troops were from ten to twenty months in arrear. That Colonel Fullarton had, in some instances, taken on himself to regulate the exchange in favour of the troops; but this was rare, and at his own risque, being authorised only by his humanity. That the sepoys were generally burdened with large families, from the custom of early marriages; their situation, therefore, was the more distressful. Mr. Hippisley then stated the mode of liquidating the arrears of the army by paper; on which the troops sustained a loss from 40 to 50 per cent., as the certificated paper could only be exchanged for bonds, when audited, which bore nearly as high a discount at Madras; and that at Bombay the Company's bonds were to be purchased, at the same period, at 65 or 70 per cent. discount. Mr. Hippisley observed, that he was very sorry he did not see an honourable Member present, (Major Maitland) who had promised him, whenever he should bring forward this motion, that he would do justice to it; and would say, in his place, that from his own experience he could vouch, that, during the late war, many of the Company's officers were driven to the sad necessity of even asking a dinner

dinner from the King's officers, with whom they were serving, though on so unequal terms in point of payment. Mr. Hippisley paid a very liberal compliment to Mr. Burke, the King's Paymaster General in India, who had often been placed in situations of great difficulty, which called for the exertion of all his judgement and accommodation, as well as the exercise of his personal credit, in keeping up the payments to his Majesty's troops. Mr. Hippisley then adverted to a variety of other proofs in his hand, and to the letters of Colonel Fullarton, Sir Henry Cosby, and Mr. Digby, which he had printed, and delivered in circulation to the Members, from himself, to evince the necessity of reform.

Mr. Hippisley then moved the following resolutions:

1. " That it appears to this House, that the payments to his Majesty's troops serving in India, and those of the East-India Company, ought to be kept as equal as possible; and that the respective payments should be so ordered, that the troops of the East-India Company should not be exposed to any delay or loss, by exchange, or otherwise, from which his Majesty's troops serving in the same garrisons or districts, may be exempted."

2. " That if any arrears to the troops should, during the present war in India, be unavoidably incurred, the liquidation of such arrears should take place of all other disbursements, and in such manner as to secure the troops from any eventual loss whatever."

3. " That it is the duty of those entrusted with the
 " direction and control of the affairs of the East-India
 " Company, to concert such measures with his Ma-
 " jesty's Secretary at War and Paymaster General, as
 " may most effectually secure the observance of a re-
 " gulation so necessary to preserve harmony in the ser-
 " vice."

General SMITH rose to second the motion. He complained of the hardships which were suffered by the sepoys, from the manner in which they received their pay. It might be wondered, he said, how they could at all contrive to subsist with such large arrears due to them as had been stated by his honourable friend: but they had an allowance of a certain quantity of rice. Yet notwithstanding, such was the extremity to which they were reduced, that they would offer to the Paymaster for one guinea, what to them was worth seven or eight pounds, and, as had been observed, would even have recourse for a subsistence to the shocking expedient of selling their own children. The General went over much of the grounds, before stated, in support of Mr. Hippisley's motions. He, in particular, stated the case of six regiments of native cavalry last war, whose pay had been suffered to run several months in arrear; these regiments were up the country many miles from the main army, when they mutinied, and confined their officers; the consequence was, the army was obliged to march the six regiments, in order to restore discipline, and set the officers at liberty. When they came up with them, they demanded instant and unconditional submission from the six regiments, and he was sorry to say, that two of the most forward of those concerned in the mutiny were blown from the mouth of a gun.

The General commented on this fact, and observed, that it was usual to pay the sepoy's in bills, and that they frequently sold a bill of eight or ten pounds, for two guineas, two guineas and a half, or three guineas, and that there was notice given them, in common, that at a public office in Madras, they might have their bills discounted.

Mr. DUNDAS acknowledged, that the evils which were now complained of, had existed ten years ago; but, he said, he had no reason to believe that they would ever return. Disputes, indeed, sometimes happened between his Majesty's and the Company's troops, relative to the inequality of their situation, chiefly in respect of rank. But he could not but object to a motion which had been brought forward, unsupported by any new facts, while he gave all credit to the generous and humane intentions of the honourable mover. At the same time he suggested, that if any evil could be proved to exist, application was open to him in his official capacity, and the means of redress would speedily be provided.

Mr. HIPPISEY, in reply to Mr. Dundas, observed, that his object in bringing forward those motions was by no means to embarrass the executive Government in India, but that he was wholly actuated by a sentiment of duty towards a service of which he had been a Member, and from a commiseration of the hardships which he had himself witnessed. He could by no means, he said, agree with the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) that there was no probability of the future existence of the evils. They had existed in the late war, principally from the want of resources,
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and a misapplication of the Bengal supplies at the conclusion of the war. In March (last year) General Meadows writes that "a long arrear was then due." What might it be now, asked Mr. Hippisley, and what probably in future? Mr. Hippisley said, that if the right honourable gentleman would give him assurances in his place, that orders should be sent out equivalent to the provision of his motions, he should be well satisfied to rest on the word of the right honourable gentleman so pledged, as he could have no object but the good of the service. Mr. Hippisley concluded with observing, that as our army was at present infinitely greater than during the last war, and our resources less, of course, the probability of the same, or greater embarrassments occurring, was but too evident, if the war was long protracted; and the Company's troops should not be exposed to such a contingency.

Major SCOTT said, that being appealed to by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) he rose with great pleasure to assure the House, that on settling the arrangement of rank between his His Majesty's and the Company's officers, when he had the honour to be one of the Committee who attended the right honourable gentlemen, he found him to be most completely disposed to do every thing in his power to remove every just cause of complaint; and from what he then saw of that right honourable gentleman's free and candid dealings in that instance, he should rest fully satisfied with a declaration from him, that he would take effectual means to remove that very serious grievance which prevailed in the last war, owing to a very invidious distinction in the mode of issuing the pay to the King's and the Company's forces. The Major said the Company's army
had

had great obligations to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hippisley) for the mode in which he had brought the present motion forward to the notice of the House. Though not a very old Member, the Major said, he was still old enough to recollect, that the existence of those distresses which had been so ably stated by the honourable mover, and so ably seconded by the honourable General, had been strongly disputed in that House; but as the fact seemed now to be universally admitted, he should say no more of it at the present moment.

As Mr. Hippisley then understood from Mr. Dundas that orders should be sent out to the desired effect, he declined dividing the House on his motions, and the order of the day being called, put an end to the debate.

COPY

*COPY of a Letter from Colonel FULLARTON, late
Commander in Chief of the Southern Army in India.*

SIR,

London, May 22, 1792.

I Have been honoured with your letter on the subject of the hardships sustained by the officers and men of the sepoy battalions on the coast of Coromandel, in consequence of the inadequate and partial payments made to them in times of public emergency. You, who have been so long and so intimately acquainted with my sentiments, on all matters connected with military service in India, cannot fail to know that I have always considered the mode of paying the Company's troops as one of the most alarming grounds of discontent that has ever occurred in any establishment.

That the King's troops employed in India should be regularly paid, is no more than a matter of justice, the breach of which might prove inconsistent with public safety ; but surely, every man who takes an interest in the preservation of the Company's territorial possessions, must feel that the fair and equal payment of the native corps is not less material to the national welfare. On this principle, I confess, it appears to me, that nothing short of bankruptcy can justify the irregular payment of the troops employed on service.

Allow me farther to observe, that an additional grievance arises from the scarcity of pagodas in the southern provinces, and the uncertain rate of exchange which takes place between pagodas and fanams, as well as
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from the issuing of the coin of one province in another, where it suffers great depreciation. You, Sir, are fully acquainted with the detail of those evils, and are well qualified to point out the adequate remedy.

You, no doubt, recollect the extreme embarrassments occasioned to the southern army by the necessity of paying the King's Troops in gold, while the native battalions were twelve and fifteen months in arrear, and frequently received no other means of subsisting their families than occasional advances of grain, or of coin not current, without 10 or 15 per cent. loss, in the place where it was issued. Should you wish for any farther information on this subject, I beg leave to refer you to the general orders of the southern army, dated Dindigal, 21st April, 1784, appointing a Committee of Inquiry into the losses sustained by the native corps in consequence of such unequal payments. This circumstance induced me, as you must recollect, to take upon myself, in that instance, the responsibility of ordering the loss to be charged to the Company and not to the battalions.

The sentiments which I had occasion to express on this subject, in my address to the Government of Fort St. George, stating that the preservation of India depended on the attachment of our native corps, are sufficient to call forth my warmest wishes for the success of your endeavours in so good a cause.

I have the honour to be, &c.

W. FULLARTON.

John Cox Hippisley, Esq. M. P.

*COPY of a Letter from Colonel Sir HENRY COSBY,
late commanding Trichinopoly.*

SIR,

Harley Street, May 26, 1791.

I Am honoured with your letter of yesterday's date, and can with great correctness subscribe to the facts and opinions you have stated in the memorandum of what you have asserted in the House of Commons, respecting the protracted arrears to the Company's troops during the last war, and the incidental distresses occasioned to every description of the military in the Company's service.

I should suppose that the lowest average of the arrears to the Company's native troops could not be less than twelve months, as many battalions were in arrear as far as fifteen and eighteen months; their necessities, from time to time, were relieved by slender issues of money and grain scarcely sufficient for their own wretched existence, and rarely affording the least relief to their families; and these slender aids were often supplied by the private exertion of the officers.

You certainly, Sir, have very truly stated the unpopular, and what you justly call *odious*, distinction in the issues of pay to His Majesty's and the Company's troops; the former, I believe, never being in arrear of subsistence, and always paid in gold; whilst the Company's officers and sepoy were obliged to receive very small payments on account of arrears in the debased currency of the southern provinces, and often only in grain at an arbitrary valuation.

The heavy loss incurred by the sepoy, in consequence of such payments, was the subject of incessant representations to me when in command, both in the field and garrisons, from the officers commanding battalions ; and you have but rendered the justice strictly due to those officers when you say, " the spirit of mutiny excited by the pressure of such accumulated hardships was often checked by their meritorious exertions."

In the hope, Sir, that your very laudable purpose may have the attention justly due to it, and that a prevention of similar evils may be the result of your exertions,

I have the honour to be, &c.

H. A. M. COSBY.

J. C. Hippisley, &c.

*COPY of a Letter from KENELM DIGBY, Esq. late
Paymaster of the Southern Army in India.*

SIR,

Welbeck Street, May 29, 1791.

I Wish I could furnish you, agreeably to your request, with accurate official statements of the arrears of the southern army during the last war, as they were liquidated by me : but I cannot have immediate reference to my papers beyond the few I inclose.

The mafs of the army and fouthern garrifons were certainly in arrear from 10 to 15 months : many corps, or parts of corps, as far as 20 months, and even more, European officers, as well as native officers and feboys. The mode of ultimate liquidation by certificated paper was a fource of general difcontent, and a heavy lofs to the troops.

You are certainly correct in ftating the invidious diftinction of payment between the King's and Company's troops, and the great lofs fufained on the exchange, which you will find alfo ftated in the proceedings of the Board of Officers held at Dindigal in April, 1784, as well as in the later proceedings of General Horne at Trichinopoly.

I certainly, Sir, cannot but agree with you, that if fome effectual remedy is not applied to obviate in future the constructive partiality in the iffues of pay to the King's and Company's troops, as well as to remedy the great lofs by exchange, and a certificated liquidation of arrears, the moft ferious confequences may be very juftly apprehended.

I have the honour to be, &c.

KENELM DIGBY.

J. C. Hippifley, Sec.

COPY

*COPY of a Letter from J. C. HIPPISEY, Esq. to
Sir HENRY COSBY.*

SIR,

Grosvenor Street, June 7, 1791.

I Have the honour to transmit to you copies of the several resolutions I yesterday moved in the House of Commons relative to the payment of the army in India. Previous to moving the resolutions, I stated to the House the distinction which obtained in the last war (in the Southern provinces at least, which fell more immediately under my own observation) between the issues of pay to his Majesty's troops and those of the Company,—the heavy loss by exchange, to which the troops were after exposed,—and finally, the grievous mode of liquidating their arrears by paper, instead of *money*. Having assured the House that I had no wish to embarrass the executive Government, but merely to vindicate the just claims of the troops to some future security, I would very willingly withdraw the motions, if I could have any assurance of the object being obtained by any other means; and I have the pleasure of informing you, that Mr. Dundas, in a conversation after the debate, gave me the fullest assurance that orders should be sent to the several presidencies which might secure, as far as possible, the provisions suggested in the resolutions I had moved in the House. Mr. Dundas requested me also to furnish him with the several documents in which I had founded the motions, and which I left in his hands.—I am persuaded, Sir, you must feel great satisfaction in having been instrumental, by your pointed testimony, in facilitating so desirable an object, and will be happy in communicating to your friends in
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the service the ready disposition manifested by Mr. Dundas to obviate any future cause of complaint on the subject of inadequate and partial payments to the Company's troops in times of public difficulty.

I have the honour to be, &c.

J. C. HIPPISELEY.

Colonel Sir Henry Cosby, &c.

COPY of a Letter from the Right Honourable HENRY DUNDAS, one of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, to J. C. HIPPISELEY, Esq.

SIR,

Wimbledon, 4th July, 1791.

I Send you the paragraph, which I have just approved, respecting the payment of the Company's troops: I did not think it proper to go farther in the public dispatch; but in my letter to Lord Cornwallis, I propose to send him the papers you gave me, as also the correspondence between you and Mr. Baring*; so that the whole subject, with your suggestions, may be before him.

I have the honour to be, &c.

H. DUNDAS.

J. C. Hippisley, &c.

* D. Chairman.

Extract

*Extract of a Letter of Court of Directors, communicated
to Mr. HIPPISEY by Mr. Secretary DUNDAS.*

" Before we quit this subject, we think it right to observe to you, that the different modes of paying the King's and Company's troops has been introduced into discussion in the House of Commons, and the hardships experienced by the latter, both European and native, in this respect pointed out. On examination into this matter, we find the subsistence to the King's troops has been regularly paid two months in advance, while considerable arrears have been owing to our own forces: we therefore direct that this grievance, for such it certainly is, be considered in the most serious manner by Lord Cornwallis, and that measures be taken by his Lordship for redressing it as far as the nature of the respective services will admit; for it should be held as a fundamental principle, that no part of the troops employed in the same service should enjoy any advantage in regard to the mode or period of paying them, which is not equally experienced by the other."

*Extract of Military Letter of Court of Directors to Fort
St. George (per Canada) dated 4th August, 1791.*

" We apprehend, that whilst the King's troops have been paid two months in advance during the last war, that ours have remained from twelve to twenty months in arrear; and that whilst the King's troops were regularly paid in gold, purchased at a premium, the Company's

pany's, who were serving on the same duty, and at the same time, were paid in the debased currency of the provinces.

" We are persuaded that our Governments will exert every nerve, and advert to every means in their power, to remedy such serious evils, and which cannot be effectually removed unless,

1st, " That the payments to the King's and Company's troops are kept as equal as possible in the period of payments, and in the denomination of currency in which they are paid :

2nd, " That if arrears are unavoidable, the troops should understand that the liquidation of such arrears will be in money, issued at a rate by which they shall not be exposed to loss by the exchange."



FINIS.

